

**TULARE COUNTY WATER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 10, 2014**

Members Present:

Allen Ishida, Board Representative and Chairman
Richard L. Schafer, District 5 Appointee
Paul Boyer, District 1 Appointee
Mike Ennis, Board Alternate Representative
Dennis Keller, At-Large Appointee
Mark Larsen, District 3 Appointee
Chris Kapheim, District 4 Appointee
Keith Watkins, At-Large Appointee

Members Absent:

Susana De Anda, At-Large Appointee
Rudy Mendoza, TCAG Representative
Dale Brogan, District 2 Appointee

Staff Present:

Julieta Martinez, Tulare County Board of Supervisors
Denise Akins, County Administrative Office
Will Jackson, County Counsel

Members of the Public who voluntarily provided their names on the attendance sheet:

Michael Hickey
W. Dale Sally
Richard Garcia
Carole Clum
Jake Raper, RMA
Shane Smith

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:05pm.

2. Public Comment Period

Carol Clum of Three Rivers made comments in regards to discussion on the drought from the January 12, 2013 meeting. She also provided Commissioners with a handout from the High Country News. See attachment for comments.

Shelly Abajian from Senator Feinstein's office provided handouts with a summary of the Senator's Emergency Drought Declaration. She asked if the Commission could lend its support in the form of a letter to Senator Feinstein.

Chairman Ishida recommended to the Commissioners to respond individually as soon as possible as it is needed before the next Commission meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes from February 10, 2014 meeting

Commissioner Keller made a correction to the minutes. Under Item number six in the last paragraph. The amount of acreage recovered was thirteen and one half thousand acre feet.

Commission Larsen noted Tooleville was spelled differently throughout the document and suggested making the correct revisions.

Motion to approve the minutes with the suggested corrections was made by Commission Larson, second by Commission Kapheim. Motion approved.

4. Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Memo of Support

Denise Akins, staff, shared that the request came from Dave Orth who is co-chair of the governor's drinking water stakeholder group. They have been working on ways to identify funding mechanisms for DAC water issues. There is a Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) that has a chapter For a Water Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act (WIFIA). While the larger WRRDA continues to be delayed, there is some support of the WIFIA component moving ahead as a standalone and also included in the final version of WRRDA. They approached Congressman Jim Costa and Congressman David Valadeo asking them to craft a letter asking that the WIFIA chapter be moved forward as a stand-alone to help DACs get funding. Before the Congressmen do that they wanted some support from groups in those two congressional districts, either IRWMP groups, Water Commission, or Board of Supervisors, that would support that move.

Commissioner Keller shared that one of the issues worked through on the Governor's task force is trying to independently move some of the projects forward with the proper concept of funding and additionally try to deal with the issue of operation and maintenance. A lot of these programs address capital costs but don't fully address operation and maintenance costs.

Commissioner Larsen asked if this creates a precedent.

Denise Akins commented that in the request they did mention to support a stand-alone but to also include some sort of WIFIA in the final WRRDA act. It would be two parts. She stated that she can send a memo or email, provided that the Tulare County Water Commission supports the idea, if a motion is provided.

Commissioner Boyer made a motion to have the memo sent in support, seconded by Commissioner Kapheim. Motion approved.

Chairman Ishida asked Denise Akins to bring the matter before the Board of Supervisors at their next meeting.

5. Discussion on potential Groundwater Subcommittee

Denise Akins asked this item be added to receive input from the water commission. She has been receiving requests for information in regards to groundwater management in the area. It would be helpful if there was some sort of group formed that can gather information for groups with inquiries.

Commissioner Kapheim stated that it would be a good idea to form a sub-committee.

Commissioner Larsen shared that he has had discussion with Denise Akins in the last week, there are many things going on and he appreciated Denise's response that the County is trying to get up to speed and on the same page. The goal was not to generate another additional process but simply allow the County to recognize the issues that were at hand, where some of this is going and be able to react when situations come up.

Commissioner Kapheim agreed that he County needs to be aware of what is going on as well as have the ability to provide input as needed.

Commissioner Larsen volunteered to be on a subcommittee and suggested Commission Kapheim join as well.

Commissioner Boyer stated that he was also interested in participating.

Denise Akins shared that she can serve as staff and facilitate the meetings. Discussion followed.

6. Update on Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantage Community Water Study

Denise Akins shared that they are currently in various stages of pilot project development. The next meeting is on the Individual Households Solutions Pilot and it is in the community review process. The next meeting will be in Visalia at 5:30 pm next Wednesday. There will be a supplemental SOAC meeting on Monday, April 21st in Visalia at 5:00 pm. There will be a meeting on June 16th and August 18th with the full SOAC. The study is moving forward and starting to wind down over the next six months or so.

Commissioner Keller noted that one of the things that was requested of the County was feedback to the legislature and state departments and they have started to develop recommendations for the Board of Supervisors to consider. They will come to the Board first for policies that can be funneled to the state legislature or to the regulatory side of the state.

7. Subcommittee Reports

Commissioner Schafer shared that with respect to the nitrate studies, with the irrigated lands regulatory programs, the identification of where there are high nitrates in the County and where the source might be will be generated with time through the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. I see little value for continuation of the nitrate program. He hopes to identify the errors in the Harter report.

8. Staff Reports

Denise Akins shared that in late January the Bureau of Reclamation released the Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigation Feasibility Study aka Temperance flat in which they found the project to be both economically and environmentally feasible. She provided them with a one page sheet providing more information in regards to the matter

Denise also stated that Mr. Hickey has brought forward the database that Tulare County has accumulated through both his efforts and the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Communities Water Study. She met with some representatives from two of the coalitions from the Tule group as well as the Upper Kings group. They may have found a way to share data and she is working with County Counsel on that process. She asked to meet with a Kaweah representative to see how they could be of assistance there as well.

9. Commissioners Comments

Chairman Ishida stated that the past Friday he met with the delegation of the San Joaquin Valley and the Delta Counties Supervisors. The meeting was held in Modesto. They are putting together a white paper to address the proposed drought relief package that the state's considering and the federal government is considering. On a separate paper the bond measures will be addressed, and they all agreed that storage is number one. Three billion dollars is the minimum. He spent three days in Sacramento last week and every meeting discussed water. Several people have said the governor is stuck on the twin tunnels. The main emphasis is still on the storage side. The biggest issue in the legislature is between the Democrats and Republicans over a clause on continuous appropriation. It has been seen in the past where there are x number millions of dollars to do something but the funds are never appropriated. They also agreed that Sites Reservoir is probably first in line in the process to be able to come under construction. Whatever project is ready to go, that's the one we want to support. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Schafer suggested looking at the raising of Shasta Dam due to the substantial potential yield of the project, even at this time. In 1978, the Bureau of Reclamation determined that by raising Shasta 200 feet they would increase the storage from four and one half million acre feet to fourteen million acre feet, for 1.4 billion dollars and increase the yield by 1.4 million acre feet above the current yield. Shasta is a keystone of storage projects in California because of the storm patterns. I have been a proponent of raising Shasta for 50 years. In my opinion it is the best location for increasing yield for both projects, the Central Valley and the State Water Project, but we have to have the federal government behind it. It has

the most potential yield due to the flows of the Sacramento, Pit, & McCloud Rivers.

Chairman Ishida stated that he believes everybody is tired of the rhetoric and the monies that we've spent that have not developed o.k. projects that we need in the State of California. Discussion followed.

10. Next meeting – Monday, April 14, 2014, 3:00 p.m. – Board of Supervisors Chambers

11. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:45pm.